



KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS®

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Time: 10:20 a.m.

Date: 'Apelila 1, 2019

Where: State Capitol Room 211

TESTIMONY

By: Kau'i Burgess

Director of Community & Government Relations

RE: SCR180/SR146, Supporting the development of a Hawaiian language plan, including goals, benchmarks, strategies, and outcomes, to build upon accomplishments and to accelerate the normalization of 'Ōlelo Hawai'i.

E ka Luna Ho'omalū Dela Cruz, ka Hope Luna Ho'omalū Keith-Agaran, a me nā Kenekoa 'ē a'e o kēia Kōmike, aloha!

Driven by the third goal of our strategic plan for 2015-2020, which guides our educational institution to cultivate a strong Native Hawaiian identity to instill confidence and resiliency in learners, Kamehameha Schools **SUPPORTS** SCR180/SR146.

In 1896, our native language was banned from being spoken in public schools. It wasn't until four generations later that the foresight, leadership, and diligent work of honorable individuals brought 'Ōlelo Hawai'i back from the brink of extinction. Today, 'Ōlelo Hawai'i is being used and celebrated in government, education, and commerce alike by approximately 18,000 speakers across the pae 'āina.

This work is nowhere near complete, however. Kamehameha Schools believes that the renormalization of Hawaiian Language in all aspects of life in Hawai'i is necessary to enable Native Hawaiians and the larger community to gain a deeper understanding of Hawai'i's history and cultural practices, and unveil over a millennia of place-based, ancestral knowledge that continues to guide innovative solutions to modern problems.

Kamehameha Schools is also pleased to provide support for Native Hawaiian charter and immersion schools, which provide critical Hawaiian language programs for our broader community.

Founded in 1887, Kamehameha Schools is an educational organization striving to restore our people through education and advance a thriving Lāhui where all Native Hawaiians are successful, grounded in traditional values, and leading in the local and global communities. We believe that community success is individual success, Hawaiian culture-based education leads to academic success and local leadership drives global leadership.

With this testimony, Kamehameha Schools **SUPPORTS** SCR180/SR146. Mahalo nui.



Legislative Testimony

SCR180 SD1/SR146 SD1

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE PLAN,
INCLUDING GOALS, BENCHMARKS, STRATEGIES, AND OUTCOMES, TO BUILD
UPON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND TO ACCELERATE THE NORMALIZATION
OF ‘ŌLELO HAWAI‘I.

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

April 1, 2019

10:20 a.m.

Room 211

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs **SUPPORTS** SCR180 SD1 and SR146 SD1, which urge ‘Aha Pūnana Leo to coordinate Hawaiian language stakeholders to develop a 35-year plan to accelerate the normalization of ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i.

Although once spoken throughout Hawai‘i by Native Hawaiians and foreigners alike, ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i was considered to be nearly extinct by the 1980s, when fewer than 50 fluent speakers under the age of 18 were left. A major reason for the deterioration of the Hawaiian language was an 1896 law that required English instruction in Hawai‘i schools, and essentially banned Hawaiian students from speaking their native tongue.

Fortunately, great strides have been made to bring about a renaissance of the Hawaiian language. Programs such as ‘Aha Pūnana Leo’s Hawaiian language immersion schools, the Department of Education’s Hawaiian language immersion program, and the Hawaiian language programs of the University of Hawai‘i system have raised a new generation of young, native speakers. Additionally, in 1978, the Hawai‘i Constitution was amended to recognize the Hawaiian language as one of the two official languages of the State.

Momentum in the revitalization of the Hawaiian language continues to build; however, for ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i to thrive, rather than simply survive, a long-term plan to increase the daily usage of Hawaiian language in homes, businesses, schools, and government must be developed. Bringing together a broad and diverse group of Hawaiian language stakeholders from around the state and across disciplines to develop a plan to establish priorities, coordinate efforts, and set goals and benchmarks has never been done before, and it will be critical to do so in order to fully normalize ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i once again.

Accordingly, we respectfully urge your Committee to **PASS** SCR180 SD1 and SR146 SD1. Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.